

Dante Alighieri

~ The Convivio ~



translated by [Philip H. WICKSTEED \(1844 - 1927\)](#)

Convivio (The Banquet) is a work written by **Dante Alighieri** roughly between 1304 and 1307. This unfinished work of Dante consists of four trattati, or "books": a prefatory one, plus three books that each include a canzone (long lyrical poem) and a prose allegorical interpretation or commentary of the poem that goes off in multiple thematic directions. The Convivio is a kind of vernacular encyclopedia of the knowledge of Dante's time; it touches on many areas of learning, not only philosophy but also politics, linguistics, science, and history. The treatise begins with the prefatory book, or proem, which explains why a book like the Convivio is needed and why Dante is writing it in the vernacular instead of Latin. It is one of Dante's early defenses of the vernacular, expressed in greater detail in his (slightly earlier) linguistic treatise *De vulgari eloquentia* (*On Eloquence in the Vernacular*). Books 2 and 3 form a unit, both focusing on Dante's new love after the death of Beatrice—his love for Lady Philosophy, "the most beautiful and dignified daughter of the Emperor of the universe," as he calls her.

Read by LibriVox volunteers. Total running time: 9:15:32

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